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Development of Performance
Measures of Individual
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DEVELOPMENT OF PERFORMANCE MEASURES OF
INDIVIDUAL PROFICIENCY IN SPECIAL FORCES

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DEVELOPMENT OF PERFORMANCE MEASURES OF INDIVIDUAL PROFICIENCY IN SPECIAL FORCES

BACKGROUND

In view of the number of personnel who do not successfully complete Special Forces training, the Special Warfare Center, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, has a requirement for the development of measures to select those individuals who possess the mental, emotional and other personal characteristics required for success in Special Forces operations. The Director of Special Warfare requested that a research project be undertaken to improve the caliber of personnel assigned to Special Forces training. Exploratory research indicated the feasibility of conducting a selection research study.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the present project was to develop a criterion measure for the Special Forces selection research program. During peacetime, field exercises and maneuvers are the closest available approximations to combat operations and thus receive extensive emphasis in evaluations of the performance of Special Forces trainees. This emphasis on high quality performance as essential for success in Special Forces operations led to the decision that the principal criterion measure for the validation studies should be a comprehensive performance assessment situation. Since measures of team performance are currently utilized in Special Forces training and the scores would be available for research purposes, the present criterion development effort concentrated on individual performance assessment.

PROCEDURES

The first step in the research project was for research personnel to become familiar with the Special Forces mission and Special Forces training course. A systematic analysis was made of all aspects of the training course to identify tentatively the important--as well as measurable--elements, and to estimate the cost and practicability of an adequate criterion measure for Special Forces training success.

ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATIONAL ELEMENTS INVOLVED IN TRAINING

All available training materials, such as curriculum outlines, lesson plans, and exercise scenarios, were analyzed to determine just what situational elements were involved in the training. The survey also served to indicate what classroom training and field exercises should be observed to obtain further information.

OBSERVATION AND PARTICIPATION IN TRAINING

HFRB research psychologists as well as military personnel in scientific and professional assignments attended formal classes, both indoors and outdoors. Most classroom training pertinent to the selection objective was observed.

Both the research psychologists and the scientific and professional military personnel observed field exercises and participated in field activities on a limited basis. The following exercises were included:

1. Survival training.
2. Patrols, raids, and ambushes.
3. Army Training Tests. ATT's were carried out at Camp Mackall, North Carolina. They involved infiltration, contact with guerrilla forces, survival, guerrilla tactics, and aerial resupply.
4. Operation Pisgah. This field exercise involved infiltration, land navigation, and guerrilla tactics in mountainous terrain.
5. Exercise Tropic Dolphin. This exercise included amphibious training, underwater demolitions, infiltration, and guerrilla training. Special emphasis was placed on dealing with guerrilla personnel, roles which were taken by non-English-speaking Puerto Rican troops.

CONSTRUCTION OF INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES

On the basis of information obtained from the situational elements analysis, observer participation in class and field exercises, and interviews with trainees, performance tests were constructed for each of the tasks or elements for which such measures were deemed warranted. The performance tasks were designed to provide an indication of the skill possessed by individual Special Forces trainees in applying the procedures, practices, and techniques acquired in training.

In order to have an indication of individual skills, all performance measurements were independent of team function or supervisory direction. Each examinee was to demonstrate his own individual skills.

The performance measures were designed to permit testing large numbers of examinees within a limited period of time and to allow all examinees identical opportunity for performance.

Three of the performance tasks called for extensive movement over terrain distances as great as 20 miles in one direction. In order to

control large numbers of examinees under such conditions, sand-tables were employed. The sand-tables allowed for performance on "miniature terrain."

TRYOUT AND REFINEMENT OF PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The performance tasks were given a full-scale dress rehearsal and were critiqued rigorously. A set of administration instructions and a scorer's check-list were available at each station of each task. All items of performance were scored by competent cadre. Scoring was accomplished on an acceptable-non acceptable basis. Total score for a task was the total number of acceptable or "yes" responses for the task. The total criterion score was the total of all tasks.

After the tryout was completed, deficiencies were rectified and the tasks refined. The tryout and critique process was repeated until the tasks were judged adequate for use as a practical criterion measure.

SPECIAL FORCES INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Nine separate performance tasks were constructed. The tasks were designed to test various aspects of performance required for success in Special Forces training as given at the Special Warfare Center. In combination, these tasks yield an integrated measure of performance proficiency, appropriate for use as criterion data in a validation study.

1. Weapons. The examinee is required to demonstrate his ability to assemble, disassemble, and utilize U. S. Army weapons used in Special Forces Training:

- 45-caliber pistol
- 30-caliber carbine
- 30-caliber submachine gun
- 30-caliber automatic rifle
- 3.5-rocket launcher
- 30-caliber light machine gun

2. Field Communications. The examinee is required to demonstrate his ability to

assemble and disassemble the AN/GRC-9 radio.

orient, install, and load a long wire antenna.

establish communications with a Net Control Station.

3. First Aid. The examinee is required to demonstrate his ability to apply the principles and techniques of first aid as they pertain to Special Forces operations and personnel.

4. Demolitions. The examinee is required to demonstrate his practical knowledge of demolitions equipment, military explosives, and types of rails and bridges. He is required to use each piece of equipment while priming and placing charges and also to demonstrate his knowledge of the different types of firing systems.

5. Land Navigation. The examinee is required to demonstrate his ability to traverse a course using a map and a compass. It is necessary for him to compute the magnetic azimuths and proceed along these azimuths.

6. Survival. The examinee is required to demonstrate his proficiency with regard to elimination or capture of sentries, river crossings, food procurement and preparation, shelters, traps and snares, and knot tying.

7. Guerrilla Tactics. The examinee is required to demonstrate, on a sand-table, the planning and organization of a raid and ambush in which guerrilla personnel are employed.

8. Aerial Resupply. The examinee is required to demonstrate his ability to perform certain operations associated with aerial resupply procedures, specifically with regard to the selection of drop zones, the reporting procedure necessary once the drop zone has been selected, the marking and layout of the drop zone, and the organization and employment of reception committees. Again, a sand-table is used.

9. Organization and Development of Guerrilla Forces. The examinee is required to demonstrate his ability to organize a guerrilla complex by placing prefabricated wooden symbols on a sand-table.